

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

Listing of Claims

1-5. (Canceled) .

6. (Currently Amended) A The fuel cell component according to ~~claim 1~~ comprising:

an electrolyte membrane; and

a plurality of insert members disposed in the electrolyte membrane that provide resistance to creep in the electrolyte membrane that would otherwise result from a compression force applied substantially perpendicular to a surface of said electrolyte membrane, wherein:

the plurality of insert members comprise PTFE and have an average outer dimension that is greater than 5 μm and no greater than a thickness of the electrolyte membrane.

7-12. (Canceled) .

13. (Currently Amended) A The fuel cell component according to ~~claim 11~~, wherein comprising:

an electrolyte membrane; and

a plurality of insert members disposed in the electrolyte membrane that provide resistance to creep in the electrolyte membrane that would otherwise result from a compression force applied substantially perpendicular to a surface of said electrolyte membrane, wherein:

the electrolyte membrane is produced from a polymer electrolyte solution having an EW value in the range of 900 to 1100, and

the EW value of the electrolyte membrane is substantially the same as the EW value of the insert member.

14-15. (Canceled).

16. (Currently Amended) A fuel cell component according to claim 1, wherein comprising:

an electrolyte membrane; and
a plurality of insert members disposed in the electrolyte membrane that provide resistance to creep in the electrolyte membrane that would otherwise result from a compression force applied substantially perpendicular to a surface of said electrolyte membrane, wherein:

the plurality of insert members comprise PTFE, have an average outer dimension in the range of about 5 to 15 μm , and

amount to not less than 1% by volume of the electrolyte
electrolyte membrane an insert members in combination.

17-18. (Cancelled).

19. (Currently Amended) A fuel cell component according to
claim 1, wherein comprising:

an electrolyte membrane; and
a plurality of insert members disposed in the electrolyte
membrane that provide resistance to creep in the electrolyte
membrane that would otherwise result from a compression force
applied substantially perpendicular to a surface of said
electrolyte membrane, wherein:

the plurality of insert members comprising a fine leaf glass
powder.

20-25. (Cancelled).

26. (Currently Amended) A fuel cell stack according to
claim 20, wherein comprising:

first and second end plate assemblies;
a fuel cell assembly interposed between said first and
second end plate assemblies and comprising fuel cell components

each comprising an electrolyte membrane and a plurality of insert members disposed in the electrolyte membrane that provide resistance to creep in the electrolyte membrane that would otherwise result from a compression force applied substantially perpendicular to a surface of said electrolyte membrane and electrodes disposed on each side of said electrolyte membrane, said fuel cell components being laminated with a plurality of separators; and

a compression assembly that clamps said first and second end plate assemblies and said fuel cell assembly together to provide said compression force, wherein:

the insert members comprise a material made of a polymer-compound whose structure of the main chain moiety is the same as that of a material of the electrolyte membrane, and said insert members are granular members.

27-30. (Canceled).